Strategy Research Project

Building and Understanding Trust Relationships

by

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Olison
United States Air National Guard

United States Army War College
Class of 2012

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 17-03-2012	2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project	3. DATES COVERED (From - To)

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Building and Understanding Trust Relationships	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Olison	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Marybeth P. Ulrich Department of National Security and Strategy	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution: A

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The military as a profession is built on a foundation of trust. Without it, the military loses the ability to serve its client, the American people. This threatens the military's ability to develop and employ its unique expertise – the application of lethal force to protect the nation's values and interests. This paper opens the aperture to allow a broader exploration of the concept of trust and its application within dynamic relationships between senior military leaders and the American people, political leaders, and subordinates in the military. Both character and competence underpin a senior military leader's ability to build trust within these three critical relationships. Trust between senior military leaders and these critical relationships must be maintained if the military is to be perceived as a true profession – a profession entrusted to ethically apply its unique expertise in defense of America's values and interests. As trustees of the military profession, senior military leaders serve as enablers of trust in these critical relationships.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Values, Leadership, Trustee, Civil-Military Relationships

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFED		32	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

BUILDING AND UNDERSTANDING TRUST RELATIONSHIPS

by

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Olison
United States Air National Guard

Dr. Marybeth P. Ulrich
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Olison

TITLE: Building and Understanding Trust Relationships

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 17 March 2012   WORD COUNT: 6,438   PAGES: 32

KEY TERMS: Values, Leadership, Trustee, Civil-Military Relationships

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The military as a profession is built on a foundation of trust. Without it, the military loses the ability to serve its client, the American people. This threatens the military's ability to develop and employ its unique expertise – the application of lethal force to protect the nation's values and interests. This paper opens the aperture to allow a broader exploration of the concept of trust and its application within dynamic relationships between senior military leaders and the American people, political leaders, and subordinates in the military. Both character and competence underpin a senior military leader's ability to build trust within these three critical relationships. Trust between senior military leaders and these critical relationships must be maintained if the military is to be perceived as a true profession – a profession entrusted to ethically apply its unique expertise in defense of America's values and interests. As trustees of the military profession, senior military leaders serve as enablers of trust in these critical relationships.

BUILDING AND UNDERSTANDING TRUST RELATIONSHIPS

Through our actions we will earn and communicate…trust.[1]

—Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen, Jr.

The U.S. military in concert with its partners and allies faces the challenge of sustaining stability and peace in a world complicated by political uncertainty and economic interdependence. To meet these challenges, senior military leaders must understand and build internal and external trust. The Ken Blanchard Company, one of the world's leading training and development experts, says it this way, "trust is a primary factor in how people work together, listen to one another, and build effective relationships."[2] Trust is a critical link to all good relationships. It is through trust that influence is gained – senior military leaders kindle the ability to affect change and achieve strategic goals.

When General Ronald R. Fogleman became the U.S. Air Force's 15th Chief of Staff in 1994, he looked very carefully at the laws specifying his duties to get a clearer understanding of those duties to include providing military advice to civilian leaders.[3] On 28 July 1997, a year before the end of his four-year term, Fogleman asked Secretary of the Air Force Dr. Sheila Widnall to be relieved of his duties as Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF).[4] He requested early retirement because he believed he had lost the ability to advise and influence civilian leaders. He thought that this loss of influence prevented him from being an effective advocate for the Air Force. In a brief public statement written and issued the same day of his request, he stated,

> My values and sense of loyalty to our soldiers, sailors, Marines and especially our Airmen led me to the conclusion that I may be out of step

with the times and some of the thinking of the establishment. This puts me in an awkward position. If I were to continue to serve as Chief of Staff of the Air Force and speak out, I could be seen as a divisive force and not a team player. I do not want the Air Force to suffer for my judgment and convictions.[5]

In other words, Fogelman's loss of trust prevented him from effectively advising political leaders, advocating for the Air Force, and maintaining the public trust. How do senior military leaders build and maintain trust in relationships?

This paper draws on Major Mark D. Rocke's award winning monograph on trust, published in a 1992 issue of *Military Review,* to answer the question why is trust important? It then opens the aperture to allow for a broader exploration of the concept of trust and applies it within dynamic relationships between senior military leaders and the American people, political leaders, and subordinate officers and noncommissioned officers in the military. Both character and competence underpin a senior military leader's ability to build trust within these three critical relationships. Trust between senior military leaders and these critical relationships must be maintained if the military is to be perceived as a true profession – a profession entrusted to ethically apply its unique expertise in defense of America's values and interests.

Next, the focus moves to exploring the role of senior military leaders as trustees of the military profession and enablers of trust. As trustees of the profession, senior military leaders serve as the central enablers for building trust relationships with the American people, elected and appointed civilian leaders, and within the military. Finally, the paper reinforces the importance and consequences of trust citing two examples: the resignations of General David D. McKiernan and General Stanley McChrystal as commanders of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

<u>Why Is Trust Important?</u>

Most people would agree that trust is extremely important, but what exactly is trust? Merriam-Webster defines trust as "one in which confidence is placed."[6] When a person has to rely on another individual's input before he or she can make an informed decision, or someone else to perform an action as directed in his or her absence, it is comforting to know that an individual or organization can be trusted. Trust is a critical component to leading in a strategic environment. Trust develops as a person becomes increasingly able to predict the actions of another based on past experiences and interactions with that person. Trust can also be conferred on an individual based on his or her membership in a professional and ethical organization such as the military.[7] It brings with it the expectation that senior military leaders will act selflessly and keep the national interest ahead of military interest.

During his 2008 welcome speech as the 19th CSAF, General Norton A. Schwartz stated that the Air Force would "…show ourselves worthy of the sacred trust our leaders, our joint brethren and the American people place in us, because this business is all about trust."[8] His selection as the CSAF came on the heels of the abrupt retirement of General Michael T. Moseley after the Air Force's nuclear weapons mishandling incident. Schwartz's emphasis on trust during his speech was meant to reassure the public of the Air Force's commitment to restoring the public's trust in the service. Rocke states, "…trust performs an indispensable function; it is a concept upon which the practice of effective leadership depends."[9] In the article, *The Army Ethic, Public Trust, and the Profession of Arms According,* Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen, Jr., prodigiously articulates the importance of trust to the military, "…it is through this ethical application of lethal force that we enter into a relationship with the American people, our

3

client. This relationship is one that can only be earned by trust."[10] General Raymond T. Odierno grabs hold of this thread and continues to solidify the importance of trust. In his initial guidance as the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, he identifies trust as the "bedrock of our [Army's] honored profession."[11] He further elaborates on the importance of trust in relationships at all levels. Though there is no universally accepted definition of trust to date, scholars and practitioners agree on its importance.[12] Trust is a key to positive interpersonal relationships, a critical component of working relationships, and a central strategic asset in organizations.[13]

Trust Relationships Actors

Within relationships, trust is based on a mutually encouraging or beneficial interaction between actors, the truster and the trustee. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) describes trust as an attitude one actor has towards another that is hoped to be trustworthy. It draws a distinction between trust and trustworthiness. Trust is an attitude (willingness to accept vulnerability and rely on others), while trustworthiness is a property or attribute (integrity of the trustee).[14]

To place trust and trustworthiness in the context of a relationship, "trust is the distinction between the trust exhibited by a truster and the trustworthiness of a trustee."[15] That is one who exhibits trustworthiness is trusted. Within the civilian-military relationship, the Constitution places the military in a subordinate relationship with civilian leaders. Senior military leaders as well as other members of the military take on the role of servant to political and elected officials and ultimately the American people. Based on the structure of this relationship, military leaders serve as trustees or one in which trust is placed based on his or her trustworthiness, whilst civilian leaders are trusters or the ones who place trust. Both actors in a relationship must have attitudes

toward one another that permit trust to be plausible in their relationship.[16] "While the responsibility for an effective partnership rests on both sides [civilian and military leaders], ultimately it is the military that must make the relationship work."[17]

<u>Concept of Trust</u>

How do senior military leaders use trust to fulfill their responsibilities? In order to answer this question, leaders have to understand how trust works. While there may not be a universally accepted definition of trust, a number of trust researchers and theorists such as, Steven M.R. Covey, Dr. Don Snider, and Mark D. Rocke conceptualize trust in terms of a moral/mental function and a skill/ability function. [18] Covey describes trust in terms of character and competence, and Snider defines trust as being professional and ethical.[19] However, it should be noted that some practitioners choose to split one of the two key functions of trust. Such is the case with Rocke, he separates predictability from competence and lists it a separate function of trust.

For the purposes of this paper, the functions of trust will be described in terms of character and competence. These components of trust will provide a wider lens in which to survey dynamic relationships between senior military leaders and the American people, political leaders, and subordinates within the institutional military. "Character is a constant, necessary for trust in any circumstance, and competence is situational depending on what the circumstance requires." [20] For senior military leaders, both character and competence are the "most critical elements of command" where failure is not acceptable if trust is to be developed.[21]

Character is necessary for trust in any circumstance; it is the bedrock value that governs a leader's behavior. [22] Elements of character include a person's integrity, motivation, and intent with people.[23] When most people think about integrity they relate

5

it to honesty, but it is much more than that. It is also having courage to ethically act on one's beliefs, eliminating the gap between intent and behavior, and being more concerned about what is right instead of being right.[24] With respect to the military, acting in an ethical manner means to act in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct and social norms of a profession such as the medical profession.[25] Ethical behavior is a categorical imperative for senior leaders if trust of the profession and in the profession is to exist. To promote trust, a leader's motives should be based on caring about the people they lead, the leaders they serve, and society as a whole.[26] The impact of intent on trust is dramatic. A leader's intentions are partially seen and unseen, and only become known by others through their behavior, and when those intentions are shared with others. They should make a conscious effort to ensure their behavior accurately reflects their true motives and agendas.[27]

Competence is situational; it invokes a leader's abilities that enables him "…to perform with excellence" – achieve results over time.[28] Competence is not defined in the strategic environment in terms of possessing the ability to perform an assigned task; it is defined in terms of matching the appropriate capability and skills of a senior military leader to perform a specific mission in order to achieve a desired result that the political leader (truster) defines. The bottom line concerning results; without results a leader does not have credibility (competence and character), and without credibility a leader loses the ability to establish and maintain trust.

Before moving on to discussing relationship dynamics, the final function of trust – risk – needs to be introduced. Risk is inherent in trust. Recalling an earlier discussion in this paper, there are two actors within a relationship, truster and trustee. The truster

accepts the risk that the trustee may act in a manner that is self-serving, not successfully completing the task(s) he or she was entrusted to do, or not complying with the agreement he or she was trusted to fulfill. The acceptance of risk creates vulnerability for the truster, especially if the trustee proves not to be trustworthy.[29]

How is risk mitigated? The truster employs risk mitigation by engaging the trustee with both the highest character and competence.[30] In other words, trustees with higher credibility present less risk to the truster. The trustee plays a pivotal role in relationships. A trustee can be an individual (or organization) that holds or manages assets for the benefit of another (truster). Trustees should exercise obedience to the truster and make decisions based on due diligence that are in the best interest of the beneficiary (truster). The trustee can and should also be held personally liable for his actions if the beneficiary deems there was a breach of trust.[31] Senior military leaders serve as trustees for the American people, civilians appointed over them, and their subordinates. As trustees, senior military leaders are legally and morally obligated to make all trust-related decisions with the truster's interests in mind.

Trust Relationships Dynamics

Now that this paper has established the importance of credibility (character and competence) and risk mitigation with respect to trust, and described the relationship in terms of interaction between actors (truster and trustee), it will shift attention to explaining the possible trust outcomes and principles underlying trust relationships with the American people, civilian leaders, and subordinate leaders within the armed forces. The truster has the option to trust or not trust the trustee, while the trustee has proven to be trustworthy or not trustworthy.[32] The figure below depicts the four possible outcomes of trust in a relationship.

	Distrust (Suspicion)	**Trust** (Partnerships)
	No Trust (Control)	**Blind Trust** (Gullibility)

Trustee axis (left): Not Trustworthy → Trustworthy
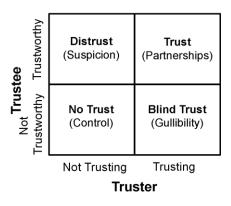*Truster* axis (bottom): Not Trusting — Trusting

Figure 1. Trust Model

In a trust relationship, once the trustee has proven to be trustworthy–

demonstrated obedience and performance based on a shared history – the truster

chooses to trust the trustee. The truster authorizes the trustee to plan and execute

decisions. Typically characterized by gullibility on the part of the trustee, blind trust

occurs when the truster accepts unnecessary risk by choosing to trust a trustee who

has not proven to be trustworthy. Blind trust also occurs when a trustee has proven to

be trustworthy in the past but the trustee chooses to act in an untrustworthy manner –

shirking his duties. Shirking takes place when a senior military leader attempts to

persuade political leaders by manipulating or withholding information in an attempt to

influence decisions and policies counter to the interests of the political leader (truster).[33]

Shirking could lead to distrust or senior military leaders ultimately being fired.

Distrust occurs when the truster has doubt and feels increased risk that the

trustee will not achieve a successful outcome, even though the trustee may have

proven to be trustworthy in the past. The truster places risk mitigation measures such as

monitoring or other constraints on the trustee up to a certain threshold.[34] Distrust does

not have to be negative. It can be beneficial if it leads to rigorous and critical thought in

support of truster interests.[35] However, beyond a certain threshold, constraints become

8

excessive and destroy trust. Civilian leaders may delegate the authority to execute a particular mission to a senior military leader. Since the civilian leaders' overall responsibility does not end with the delegation of authority, they will most likely put monitoring or some other progress checking measure in place to check progress. If the civilian leader feels the military strategy is not meeting national policy objectives, he could put more restrictive measures in place. These controls would in essence undo the authority delegated to the senior military leader.

Characterized by competition, low productivity and (truster) control, no trust occurs when increased levels of constraints or monitoring placed on the trustee becomes counterproductive causing the trustee to spend an excessive amount of time providing feedback instead of accomplishing his assigned task. No relationship exists between the truster and trustee in no trust relationships – the truster exerts control and the trustee typically retires, resigns, or is fired.

The most productive relationships exist in trust relationships. These relationships are characterized by increased partnering and collaboration and minimal risk. This creates a virtuous cycle where the truster readily delegates authority to the trustee. Covey refers to this trust in relationships as the "sweet spot" or "smart trust" where huge dividends are created.[36] The ability to build relationships based on trust is an important strategic leadership competency (knowledge, skills, attributes, and ability), and facilitates the evaluation of three trust relationships with the American people, civilian leaders, and junior leaders critical to the military profession.[37]

Relationship With The American People

Trust plays an integral role in American society, and some believe that America has experienced a decline in trust due to corruption or perceived corruption in national

9

government and financial institutions.[38] The support the military currently enjoys from the American people is extremely important. The military depends on it. The key principle to senior military leaders (trustees) enabling trust in the military's relationship with the American people is contribution – "the intent to create value instead of destroying it, to give back instead of take."[39] The military must always uphold the nation's values. Senior military leaders convey the contributions and address institutional failures in sustaining the military's trust relationship with the American people.

In January 2012, four Marines urinated on dead Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Actions such as these violate American values, military ethical standards, and human decency. General James Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, appointed Lieutenant General Thomas Waldhauser to oversee the investigation of the incident.[40] These types of highly publicized, reprehensible actions require the attention and involvement of senior military leaders to prevent them from eroding the trust the American people has in the military. Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, emphasized the importance of actions of military service members in his posture statement, "we can never let our actions move us away from the American people, and that the quality of our work and our personal conduct will say far more about who we are and what we stand for than anything else we do.[41] The implications of the Marines' actions in the example above are much more than individual members of the military behaving badly. Such unethical behavior violates the military's compact with the American people – the expected professional and ethical behavior of military service members – and threatens the military's autonomy. Such morally wrong actions also

overshadow and destroy the military's contribution to society, which could ultimately lead to the destruction of trust between the American people and the military.

When senior military leaders as well all other members of the profession take the oath of service, the oath is to the Constitution.

> And it is in the Constitution that we find the military in a relationship subordinate to our civil authorities who, incidentally, are elected by the American people. So ultimately, it is the American people who are our clients and to whom we are subservient. To truly be professionals and discharge our duty to serve the American people, we must develop a relationship of trust with them.[42]

The duties and the professional and ethical manner in which members of the military profession execute those duties harkens back to the senior military leader's oath of office where an allegiance is sworn to support and defend the Constitution. Senior military leaders are entrusted to oversee the development and sustainment of a profession capable of projecting lethal force in order to protect the American people and uphold the Nation's values.

Because a large sector of the American public develops its opinions of the military from the media, the media plays an important role in shaping the military's relationship with the American people.[43] Senior military leaders should not wait for major accomplishments or failures to engage the media, and thus the American people – the military's trustworthiness with the public and autonomy are at stake[44]. Society grants legitimacy and autonomy to the military as members of a profession.[45] To help build trust between the military and the public, senior military leaders should communicate the military's contributions to society, and the importance of the military having a good relationship with society.[46] The professionalism and contributions of the military are not only essential for building trust with the American people, but also serve to counteract

suspicion and cynicism in some areas of society. Conveying professionalism and contribution also inspires the support of and patriotism in others.

Relationship with Civilian Leaders

Senior military leaders must do everything possible to establish the foundation for trust in their relationships with civilian leaders.[47] Consistent behavior underpins the ability to build trust relationships.[48] Table 1 identifies 13 behaviors to develop consistent behavior and improve relationships.[49] Members of the military typically exercise these behaviors as part of the military culture. However, presenting the behaviors in a consolidated list helps to validate their importance in building and improving civil-military relationships.

Talk Straight	Be honest. Demonstrate integrity. Don't spin the truth.
Demonstrate Respect	Show you care. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can't do anything for you. Don't fake caring.
Create Transparency	Tell the truth in a way people can verify. Be open and authentic. Don't hide information.
Right Wrongs	Demonstrate personal humility. Don't let pride get in the way of doing the right thing. Make things right when you are wrong.
Show Loyalty	Speak about people as if they are present. Give credit freely. Don't disclose other's private information.
Deliver Results	Get the right things done. Accomplish what you were hired to do. Don't over promise and under deliver.
Get Better	Don't consider yourself above feedback. Don't assume today's knowledge and skills will be sufficient for the future challenges.
Confront Reality	Address the tough stuff directly. Acknowledge the unsaid. Don't bury your head in the sand.
Clarify Expectations	Discuss and reveal expectations. Discuss them. Validate them. Don't violate them.
Practice Accountability	Hold yourself accountable. Hold others accountable. Be clear on how you'll communicate how you're doing — and how others are doing.
Listen First	Listen before you speak. Don't assume you know what matters the most. Don't presume you have all the answers — or all the questions.
Keep Commitments	Say what you're going to do, then do what you say you're going to do. Make keeping commitments a symbol of your honor.
Extend Trust	Demonstrate a propensity to trust. Extend trust to those who have earned your trust.

Table 1. Behaviors to Improve Relationships[50]

Simply put, a leader's words should be consistent with his or her actions. In addition to the behaviors discussed above, senior military leaders must communicate their willingness to carry out orders and instructions to the best of their ability, insist on the right to give unvarnished military advice, and progressively change and transform military policy in the interest of the nation rather than the military institution.[51] Senior military leader actions should demonstrate obedience and trustworthiness in support of politically elected and appointed leadership decisions and policies. In *Dissent and Strategic Leadership of the Military Profession* Snider writes,

> The U.S. military is subordinate to the President and to certain designated officials in the Executive branch as well as to elected political leaders in Congress. According to the U.S. Constitution, these two branches of the federal government share primary authority and responsibility for military affairs.[52]

Senior military leaders should remain politically neutral and refrain from engaging in political affairs. Political neutrality provides the best setting in which senior military leaders can advise their civilian bosses.

The U.S. Constitution ensures the subordination of the military to civilian leadership; this in effect supports the mandate for military strategy to support national policy. While it clearly defines the structural or hierarchal arrangement of the civil-military relationship, the Constitution does not define the nature of this relationship. For that, one should focus on the individual actors in the relationship, the political and senior military leaders. Consider the nature of the civil-military relationship between Otto von Bismarck and General Helmuth von Moltke, it serves as an example of a productive trust relationship.

William I became the King of Prussia in 1861 after the death of an ailing Frederick Wilhelm IV. During his reign, he appointed Bismarck, an experienced

politician and former Prussian Ambassador to Russia and France, as Prime Minister. William I also appointed Moltke as field commander of the Prussian army on June 2, 1866. Bismarck, "exceptionally perceptive and intuitive as a politician and diplomat", had proven himself to be a loyal and trustworthy civil servant in support of his king's interest.[53] His political maneuvering allowed William I to circumvent the Prussian Chamber of Deputies and expand the size of the Prussian Army, and in 1864, he intentionally involved Prussia and Austria in a war against Denmark over the territories of Schleswig-Holstein that led to war between Prussia and Austria.

Moltke, who openly acknowledged Carl von Clausewitz as one of his "philosophical mentors", understood the role of politics and national policy in war.[54] In the war against Austria, Moltke wanted to destroy the Austrian army and then defeat Austria. However, in support of the strategic goals of William I, Bismarck wanted to enhance Prussia's role in German affairs and advance the stature of the House of Hohenzollern.[55] Though philosophical disagreements on policy objectives created tension between Moltke and Bismarck, Moltke had earned Bismarck's trust.

> Bismarck wrote that Moltke was a completely rare human being, who methodically – 'ein Mann der systematischen Pflichterfüllung' – fulfilled his duties, a man of singular, original nature, always dependable, with a cool heart and very restrained personality.[56]

Bismarck and Moltke worked together to orchestrate the Austrian War. Bismarck defined the political objects and Moltke implemented – in consultation with Bismarck – the military strategy to best achieve those objectives. The war lasted for 7 weeks and effectively stripped Austria of its role as a leader in German politics and established Prussia in a leading role. William's subjugation of the military to civilian authority,

14

combined with Moltke's military skills and Bismarck's diplomacy led to a unified Germany.

<u>Relationship with Subordinates</u>

Edgar H. Schein, Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus at the MIT Sloan School of Management, writes "… it is one of the unique functions of leadership not only to create cultures in new groups, but also to manage cultural issues in mature organizations."[57] Senior military leaders face the challenge of creating and managing the Profession of Arms as the military transforms to ensure it is ready to protect the American people from future threats. Building a trust relationship with subordinates (both commissioned and non-commissioned officers) involves building institutional trust within the military using the principle of alignment, the alignment of organizational strategy and culture.[58] Alignment occurs in dynamic organizational systems such as the military when compatibility and consistency exist between its strategy and culture.

Strategic leaders articulate their intent and goals. Defining strategic goals help strategic leaders determine if they are making progress towards achieving policy objectives and eliminating distractions. Strategic goals are issue-oriented statements that begin to focus actions toward clearly defined purposes. They provide a basis for decision making about the nature, scope, and relative importance of organizational activities.[59] However, goals alone will not lead to the successful achievement of desired outcomes without understanding the importance of defining and understanding acceptable behavior.

Values define the acceptable standards that govern the behavior of an individual or organization. Without organizational values, individuals would pursue behaviors that are in line with their own individual beliefs. This may lead to behaviors that an

organization does not wish to encourage. It is imperative that leaders operating

strategically understand that their values are partially determined by their personal

background and shared experiences, and realize the impact their individual values have

on their organization's effectiveness and efficiency.[60] Senior military leaders should

recognize two important implications of values when leading organizations. First, the

existing organizational values will impact their leadership approach; and second, their

personal values influence their decision making and organizational values.

Values reinforce how an individual or organization operates, conducts business,

treats stakeholders, and defines importance. In particular, organizational values help

determine strategic goals and organizational culture.[61] A statement of values can be

extremely helpful for understanding an individual's belief, an organization's culture, and

for developing organizational goals and strategies.[62] The Air Force Core Values -

integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do – apply to all members of

the Air Force. These organizational values are "the common bond among all Airmen,

and they are the glue that unifies the service and ties to the great warriors and public

servants of the past."[63] Dr. Sheila Widnall and Gen Fogleman indoctrinated the Air

Force Core Values to foster an atmosphere of accountability and define success. The

core values instill confidence, create willing followers, and instill mental and physical

courage in all Airmen.[64]

Recalling how Schwartz became CSAF after Moseley abruptly retired as the

CSAF, Schwartz's took on the mantra of restoring trust in the Air Force. Building

institutional trust within the military requires the alignment of strategy and culture

including adherence to organizational values and holding all members of the Air Force

accountable for their actions. In an unprecedented action as reported by the Air Force Times on December 31, 2010, 13 Air Force general officers, ranging from four star commanders to one star, received letters of admonishment (one received a reprimand) since the summer of 2008 when Schwartz became CSAF.[65] The offenses ranged from poor oversight of the nuclear weapons program to dating a woman while legally separated.[66] According to the article, a retired general officer stated that generals held responsible for violating Air Force rules without criminal intent or fraud would have been told in private not to repeat the mistake.[67] Schwartz's actions were consistent with the Air Force core values and meant to restore accountability in the Air Force.

Ethical compromise by senior military leaders – at the expense of subordinates – in favor of other senior military leaders due to their operational effectiveness, only serves to undermine trust within the Profession of Arms. Building trust relationships between senior military leaders and the institutional military requires the alignment of strategic goals and objectives with organizational and personal (senior military leader) values, beliefs, and actions. "As long as those being led trust the leader's competence [and character] to find the way, recognize the end and look after them, they will follow."[68]

Senior Military Leaders

It is within the confines of civil-military relations that Samuel Huntington defined the three responsibilities of military leaders in his 1957 book, *The Soldier and the State*. Marybeth Ulrich provides a more modern day translation of Huntington's original text in her chapter, *Infusing Normative Civil-Military Relations Principles in the Officer Corps*: "(1) to represent the profession in both executive and legislative settings, public and private, (2) to advise political leaders on state policy, but only from the perspective of a military professional, and (3) to execute, implementing the policy of the state."[69]

As representatives of the profession, senior military leaders provide their expert opinion on the development and application of the military. They have the unique responsibility of ensuring the military profession has "the expert knowledge needed to serve the client [military service members, civilian and military superiors, and American people], and has embedded that knowledge into individual professionals and their units such that the profession can practice its art when and where the client might request it."[70] While fulfilling their advisory responsibilities, senior military leaders provide impartial advice to political leaders on the use of military force, all the while keeping in mind that the responsibility and consequences of the final decision rests on the shoulders of the civilian leaders. Senior military leaders have the enormous task of providing advice to the political leadership. While this advice may or may not be accepted, "it is through providing unvarnished and viable alternatives that the military builds trust with our civilian leaders."[71] The executive role of the senior military leader is one of service; service to the state and service to the military's ultimate client, the American people.

Consonant with the responsibilities of military strategic leaders, there are two more topics worth mentioning, dissent and the media. The roles and responsibilities of the military leaders to provide expert military advice to civilian masters is clear, and the decision to accept or not accept that advice also rests with the civilian leaders. What happens when there is a legitimate disagreement between military and civilian in which the senior military leader feels exceptionally strong about the disagreement? Dissent is justified when legitimate disagreements between civilian and military leaders arise over policy advice. However, it should be noted that military advice should be confined to

18

military aspects of a decision. Senior military leaders should not exceed the military advisor limits of dissent because it places them in the role of political actors.[72]

Trust in any relationship is important; it must be cultivated. The dynamics of trust between civilian and military relationships is no different. It requires military leaders to adhere to responsibilities, remain politically neutral, and provide viable military alternatives when advising political leaders. The loss of trust in senior military leaders reduces their ability to influence civilian leadership, which could lead to the misapplication of military force, and ultimately lead to policy failure. Understanding trust empowers military leaders with the ability to influence civilian decision-makers and realize their duties as advisors.

The media plays an important role in American society. In an article titled, *The Military-Media Relationship: A Dysfunctional Marriage*, Tom Shanker, a Pentagon reporter, and Major General Mark Hertling engage in a dialog on the importance of the media-military relationship. The media is passionate about meeting its constitutional and professional ethics to keep the American people informed on what's going on within the military and in the formulation of security policy.[73] The public does "have the right to know what's going on as the military fights and executes policy", but from Hertling's perspective, the military wants the public to understand its role of protecting and defending the Constitution and the Nation's ideals and values.[74] Trust is a central tenet in the media-military relationship. Shanker points out the difficulty of building and maintaining trust between the media and the military. He states, "in the information age, the first casualty of war is trust—trust between those who fight the wars and those

whose job it is to report them."[75] However, senior military leaders and journalists have the responsibility of building trust in the media-military relationship.

Applying Concepts of Trust

Now that the nature of senior relationships has been established and the responsibilities of senior military leaders have been identified, I will analyze two known civil-military case studies using the concept of trust: the resignations of General David D. McKiernan and General Stanley McChrystal as commanders of the ISAF in Afghanistan.

McKiernan, an armor officer who more than competently led conventional U.S. ground forces during the 2003 Iraq invasion was appointed as the commander of the ISAF in Afghanistan in May 2008 by President George W. Bush. McKiernan continued to serve in that capacity under President Barack Obama, along with Defense Secretary Robert Gates. During a routine briefing between Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Admiral Mike Mullen, and McKiernan, Gates and Mullen became concerned about McKiernan's answers regarding reconstruction and counter-narcotics operations in Afghanistan.[76] McKiernan's inability to address what they believed to be relevant and pertinent questions only fueled their doubt that his strategy may not be the right one for Afghanistan.[77] Shortly after this exchange, Gates removed McKiernan as the commander of the ISAF — criticizing his strategy for being too conventional.[78]

Using the concepts of trust as an analytical framework, the increasing level of details Gates and Mullen requested during what were intended to be routine phone calls, could be viewed as means to mitigate the perceived increased risk of McKiernan's strategy failing. In essence, Gates and Mullen's perceived risk of failure would increase due to McKiernan's inability to explain a cogent strategy. Gates and Mullen's

unsuccessful attempt to mitigate risk gave rise to distrust that McKiernan's conventional strategy was the correct strategy for Afghanistan. Failing to formulate the appropriate strategy for a successful campaign, as defined by civilian leaders, is a competence failure, which led to a loss of trust and ultimately McKiernan's removal.

On 23 June 2010, President Barack Obama stood behind a podium in the White House Rose Garden, flanked by Vice President Joe Biden, Defense Secretary Gates, CJCS Mullen, and General David Petraeus, when he announced his acceptance of McChrystal's resignation as commander of the ISAF in Afghanistan. He made it a point early in his speech to state that he did not accept McChrystal's resignation based on a difference in policy because they were in full agreement about their strategy. This is an extremely important statement because it reassures all stakeholders that the current policies were achieving the desired results in Afghanistan. McChrystal also reassured the public that the strategy was sound when he released a statement saying, "I strongly support the President's strategy in Afghanistan and am deeply committed to our coalition forces, our partner nations, and the Afghan people. It was out of respect for this commitment — and a desire to see the mission succeed — that I tendered my resignation."[79]

In this example, McChrystal's resignation, unlike McKiernan's was not due to his ability to come up with the appropriate strategy, but character. The disparaging remarks that members of his staff made in *Rolling Stone* magazine regarding his civilian bosses displayed conduct unbecoming an officer and certainly a commanding general. The military is constitutionally mandated to serve its political masters. As the civilian and military leadership strive to protect and defend the American people and their values,

there may be times they legitimately disagree and dissent may be a viable recourse. However, publicly airing differences damages the civil-military trust relationship and serves to undermine the civilian control of the military. Suffice it to say, character is an imperative for a senior military leader, and it is vital to building trust relationships. President Obama preserved the trust relationships with the American people, Congress, the troops serving in Afghanistan, and other stakeholders by replacing McChrystal with Petraeus, the originator of the Afghan counterinsurgency strategy. The Senate unanimously confirmed Petraeus as the commander in Afghanistan the week after his nomination.[80] Petraeus' quick confirmation serves as proof that the President garnered the trust of the Senate and the American people.

Conclusion

Strategic leaders understand the importance of establishing goals for a higher policy or strategy. They should also be aware of the importance of being self-aware and understanding the influence their individual values have on decision-making and their organization. The ability for strategic leaders to understand and deliberately build trust between their civilian leadership is not only critical to maintain influence, but for the effective execution of national goals and strategies. The McKiernan and McChrystal incidents serve as case studies for examining the two functions for trust, competence and character, and illustrate the consequences that occur when civilian leaders lose trust in senior military leaders. The examples in this paper were in no way meant to imply that McKiernan and McChrystal were not both credible and accomplished senior military leaders. In a moment in time – transition periods of U.S. operations in Afghanistan – McKiernan's strategy did not support the presidential administration's policy objectives.[81] As for McChrystal, he increased civil-military tensions by getting

caught in the policy debate and formulation process.[82] As trust goes, so does influence. Without trust, even the most highly decorated senior military leader increase the chance of military failure in support of national interest due to his or her inability to build and sustain trust relationships.

As trustees of the profession, senior military leaders serve as the central enablers for building trust relationships with the American people, elected and appointed civilian officials, and subordinates within the military. Both character (integrity, motive, and intent) and competence (capabilities, skill, and results) underpin a senior military leader's ability to build trust within these three critical relationships. Senior military leaders sustain these trust relationships by consistently achieving results. Trust results from consistent performance over time, but failure or perceived failure in character or competence results in a loss of trust.[83]

Senior leaders in the Army should continue embracing and voicing the importance of trust, while senior leaders in the Marines, Navy, and Air Force should start to have more open and vocal discussions on the importance of trust. As trustees of the profession of arms and servants of the American people, senior military leaders from all services should also place increased emphasis on building and understanding how trust is lost and gained. "Well done my good and faithful servant" should not only be the motivational force guiding senior military leaders, but all who swear an oath to the Constitution and serve in the armed forces.[84] No greater words have ever been spoken as a testimony that those entrusted to do their master's bidding performed honorably in the service of the American people, their civilian masters, and the service men and women they lead. The final recommendation of this paper is to identify

building trust as a strategic competence. The importance of trust should be ingrained as

the foundation of productive relationships and be kept at the appropriate level of

importance in the minds and hearts of military leaders.

Endnotes

   [1] Robert L. Caslen, Jr. and Nathan K. Finney, "The Army Ethic, Public Trust, and the Profession of Arms According," *Military Review: The Profession of Arms*, September 30, 2011, 16.

   [2] The Ken Blanchard Company, "Building Trust," 2010,pdf, http://www.kenblanchard.com/img/pub/Blanchard-Building-Trust.pdf (accessed November 27, 2011).

   [3] Richard H. Kohn, "The Early Retirement of Gen. Ronald Fogleman, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force," *Aerospace Power Journal*, (Spring 2001), 1.

   [4] Ibid.

   [5] Ibid.

   [6] "Trust," linked from *Merriam-Webster*, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trust (accessed September 26, 2011).

   [7] Barbara D. Adams and Robert D.G. Webb, "Trust in Small Military Teams," http://www.dodccrp.org/events/7th_ICCRTS/Tracks/pdf/006.PDF (accessed February 26, 2012).

   [8] Julie Weckerlein, "General Schwartz in as 19th chief of staff," August 12, 2008, http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123110516 (accessed November 26, 2011).

   [9] Mark D. Rocke, "Trust: The Cornerstone of Leadership," *Military Review*, August 1992, 31.

   [10] Caslen, "The Army Ethic," 14.

   [11] Raymond T. Odierno, "38th Chief of Staff of the Army Guidance," Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, September 11, 2011.

   [12] Oliver E. Williamson, "Calculativeness, Trust, and Economic Organization," *Journal of Law and Economics 36, no. 1* (April 1993): 453.

   [13] D. Harrison McKnight and Norman L. Chervany, "The Meaning of Trust," http://misrc.umn.edu/wpaper/WorkingPapers/9604.pdf (accessed December 26, 2011).

   [14] Carolyn McLeod, "Trust," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Spring 2011 Edition, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/trust/ (accessed October 29, 2011).

[15] Karen S. Cook et al., "Does Trust Beget Trustworthiness? Trust and Trustworthiness in Two Games and Two Cultures: A Research Note," October 24, 2004, http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~coye/papers/Faith-TrustKYCC102404rev1.pdf (accessed December 27, 2011).

[16] McLeod, "Trust," 2.

[17] Richard H. Kohn, "Building Trust: Civil-Military Behavior for Effective National Security," in *American Civil-Military Relationships: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*, ed. Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 287.

[18] Jason A. Colquitt, Brent A. Scott, and Jeffery A. LePine, "Trust, Trustworthiness, and Trust Propensity: A Meta-Analytic Test of Their Unique Relationships With Risk Taking and Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, no. 4, (2007), 910.

[19] Don Snider, "Strategic Leadership of the Military Professional," lecture, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, October 12, 2011, cited with permission of Dr. Snider.

[20] Steven M.R. Covey, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing Thant Changes Everything* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 30.

[21] Rocke, "Cornerstone of Leadership," 34.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 30.

[24] Ibid., 72.

[25] Snider, lecture.

[26] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 84

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 91.

[29] McLeod, "Trust," 3.

[30] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 296.

[31] "Definition of Trustee," linked from *Investopedia,* http://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/trustee.asp#ixzz1i84wNM7u (accessed December 31, 2011).

[32] Cook, "Does Trust Beget Trustworthiness," 4.

[33] Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 57.

[34] McLeod, "Trust," 3.

[35] Kohn, "Building Trust," 272.

[36] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 35.

[37] Don M. Snider, "Dissent and Strategic Leaders of the Profession," February 19, 2008, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=849 (accessed November 26, 2011).

[38] Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures,* 3rd ed. (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2006), 146.

[39] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 275.

[40] Robert Burns, "Marines Urinating On Taliban: All 4 Marines Identified," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/13/marines-urinating-on-taliban-identified_n_1204653.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[41] Michael Mullen, *Posture Statement of Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Before the 112th Congress House Armed Services Committee.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2011), 20.

[42] Caslen, "The Army Ethic," 14.

[43] Ike Skelton, "The Civil-Military Gap Need Not Become a Chasm," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 64 (1st Quarter 2012), 66.

[44] Autonomy is defined by Dr. David Segal and Dr. Janet Schwartz in there 1981 paper on "Professional Autonomy of the Military in the United States and the Soviet Union" as the degree to which the professional nuclei of the armed forces are constrained by political and organizational forces external to the military. In the U.S., this theme is central to the debate between Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz regarding the sufficiency of professional ethical neutrality on the part of the military for the maintenance of civilian control over the armed forces.

[45] David L. Perry, "Military Ethics and Business Ethics," December 2003, http://home.earthlink.net/~davidlperry/milbus.htm (accessed February 7, 2012).

[46] Skelton, "Civil-Military Gap," 64.

[47] Kohn, "Building Trust," 274.

[48] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 34.

[49] Ibid., 127.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Kohn, "Building Trust," 267.

[52] Snider, "Dissent and Strategic Leaders," 5.

[53] Samuel J Newland, "Victories Not Enough: Limitations of the German Way of War," December 2005, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub634.pdf (accessed January 2, 2012), 18.

[54] Ibid., 21.

[55] Ibid., 22.

[56] Arden Bucholz, Moltke And The German Wars, 1864 – 1871 (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 78.

[57] Edgar H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, New and rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xi.

[58] Covey, *Speed to Trust*, 34.

[59] John M. Byron and Farnum K. Alston, *Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan: A Workbook For Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 169.

[60] Schein, *Corporate Culture*, 19.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Byron, *Your Strategic Plan*, 54.

[63] U.S. Department of the Air Force, *United States Air Force Core Values* (Washington DC: Department of the Air Force, January 1, 1997).

[64] Ibid., II.

[65] Bruce Rolfsen, "Brass sanctions 'unprecedented'," December 31, 2010, http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2010/12/air-force-general-sanctions-called-unprecedented-123110w/ (October 30, 2011).

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War In The Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 67.

[69] Marybeth Ulrich, "Infusing Normative Civil-Military Relations Principles in the Officer Corps," in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 665.

[70] Snider, "Dissent and Strategic Leaders".

[71] Caslen, "The Army Ethic," 18.

[72] Marybeth P. Ulrich, "A Primer on Civil-Military Relationships for Senior Leaders," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume II National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, July 2010), 308.

[73] Tom Shanker and Mark Hertling, "The Military Media Relationship: A Dysfunctional Marriage?," Military Review, October 2009, 2.

[74] Ibid., 3.

[75] Ibid., 3.

[76] Ann Scott Tyson, "Gen. David McKiernan Ousted as Top U.S. Commander in Afghanistan," May 12, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/11/AR2009051101864.html (October 16, 2011).

[77] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Pentagon Worries Led to Command Change," August 17, 2009 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/16/AR2009081602304.htm (October 16, 2011).

[78] Ibid.

[79] Charles Dharapak, "Obama relieves McChrystal of command: Gen. David Petraeus to take over the troubled Afghan war," June 23, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37866754/ns/us_news-military/t/obama-relieves-mcchrysta (August 13, 2011).

[80] Brendan Smialowski, "Senate confirms Petraeus as Afghanistan commander: Obama's pick endorsed to take over from Stanley McChrystal," June 30, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38019057/ns/politics-capitol_hill/t/senate-confirms-petraeu (August 14, 2011).

[81] Charles Allen, "Lessons not learned: Civil-military disconnect in Afghanistan," Armed Forces Journal (September 2010), 32.

[82] Ibid., 33.

[83] Rocke, "Cornerstone of Leadership," 40.

[84] New International Version, "Matthew 25:21, in *The Living Insights Study Bible*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 1034.